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Analytical Paper

Profiles of Ethnic Communities in Canada

The African Community in Canada

2001

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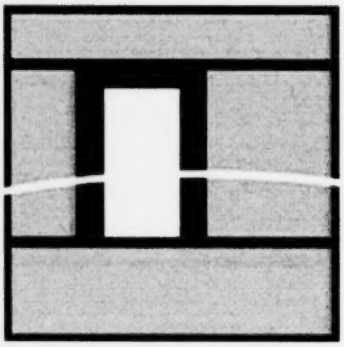

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The following standard symbols are used in Statistics Canada publications:

.	not available for any reference period
..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0^s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
p	preliminary
r	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the Statistics Act
E	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published

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Information on the series

This report was prepared by the Target Groups Project of Statistics Canada. This report is part of a series of profiles which will include profiles of the East Indian, Filipino, Haitian, Jamaican, Japanese, Korean, Lebanese and Vietnamese communities in Canada, as well as profiles of Canadians of Arab, Caribbean, Latin American, South Asian and Chinese origins.

Ordering print copies

To order print copies of this profile or any of the other profiles in this series, contact the Multiculturalism Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage at 1-888-77MULTI (1-888-776-8584) or 819-953-1970. The report is also available free of charge on the Statistics Canada website at: http://www.statcan.ca

Questions or comments

For questions or comments about the content of this report, please contact Statistics Canada at 613-951-2603; fax 613-951-0387 or e-mail lindcol@statcan.ca.

Highlights

- People with African ethnic roots make up one of the largest non-European ethnic groupings in Canada. In 2001, there were almost 300,000 people reporting they had African roots living in Canada, representing around 1% of the total population of Canada. As well, the African population in Canada is growing considerably faster than the overall population.

- The majority of the African population living in Canada were born outside the country. As well, the majority of African immigrants living in Canada today are relatively recent arrivals.

- Over nine out of 10 Canadians of African descent live in one of four provinces: Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, or Alberta. Indeed, almost 60% live in Ontario where they make up close to 2% of the total population.

- The African population in Canada is relatively young. In 2001, those under the age of 25 made up 49% of all those with African ethnic origins, compared with 33% of the overall population. In contrast, people aged 65 and over made up only 3% of the African population, whereas 12% of all Canadians were seniors.

- Almost all African people in Canada can speak at least one official language. Indeed, in 2001, less than 2% could speak neither English nor French.

- People in the African community in Canada are considerably less likely than other people to be married; they are also less likely to live in a common-law relationship. In contrast, those of African descent are more likely than the rest of the population to be lone parents.

- People in the African community in Canada are somewhat more likely than the rest of the population to have university degrees. In 2001, 19% of African people aged 15 and over were university graduates, compared with 15% in the overall adult population.

- People in the African community in Canada are somewhat less likely to be employed than the rest of the population, while they are generally much more likely to be unemployed. In 2001, 13.1% of African labour force participants were unemployed, compared with 7.4% of all labour force participants.

- The incomes of the African population in Canada are generally below those of the rest of the population. In 2000, people aged 15 and over who identified themselves as having African ethnic origins had an average income from all sources of just under $24,000, about $6,000 less than the national figure.

- A relatively large proportion of African people are considered to have low incomes. Indeed, in 2000, 39% of the African population in Canada had incomes below official Low-income Cut-offs, compared with 16% of the overall Canadian population. That year, 47% of African children under the age of 15 lived in a situation considered to be low income, compared with 19% of all children in Canada.

Introduction

This report describes the basic social and economic characteristics of people in Canada who have an ethnic or cultural origin in Africa. It is part of a series of profiles of the country's major non-European ethnic groups.

The information in this profile is taken mostly from the 2001 Census of Canada, the most recent source of census data. Statistics Canada conducts the Census every five years. One in five households receives a long questionnaire that asks household residents to indicate the ethnic or cultural groups to which their ancestors belonged. This profile is based on people who reported an origin that originates in Africa.

This publication also uses information from the Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS), which was conducted in 2002 by Statistics Canada in partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage. The EDS surveyed more than 42,000 Canadians over the age of 15. The objectives of the EDS were to understand more about how people's backgrounds affect their participation in Canadian society, economy and culture, and how Canadians from different ethnic backgrounds report and describe their ethnicity.

Although the EDS and the Census provide very useful information, caution should be exercised in making direct comparisons between groups, particularly as they relate to causal implications, because the data have not been adjusted to take into account differences in age, education, length of time in Canada and other factors.

This profile is based on the Census population, which includes the following groups:

- Canadian citizens (by birth or by naturalization) and landed immigrants with a usual place of residence in Canada (including those who are abroad, either on a military base or attached to a diplomatic mission; or who are at sea or in port aboard merchant vessels under Canadian registry),
- Persons with a usual place of residence in Canada who are claiming refugee status and members of their families living with them,
- Persons with a usual place of residence in Canada who hold:
    - a student authorization (student visa or student permit);
    - an employment authorization; or
    - a Minister's permit (including extensions);
    - and members of their families living with them.

For the purpose of this profile, the term "Canadians" includes all persons with a usual place of residence in Canada, regardless of their citizenship status.

The African Community in Canada

A growing community

People of African origin[1] make up one of the largest non-European ethnic groupings in Canada. Indeed, as of 2001, there were almost 300,000 people reporting they had African roots living in Canada. That year, those of African descent made up around 1% of the total population of Canada.

Table 1
Selected ethnic groups in Canada, other than English, French and Canadian, 2001

	Total population	Multiple responses	Single responses	As a proportion of the total Canadian population
		thousands		percentage
South Asian	963.2	160.9	802.3	3.2
Caribbean	503.8	180.2	323.6	1.7
Arab	348.0	109.4	238.6	1.2
African	**294.7**	**110.0**	**184.7**	**1.0**
Latin American	244.4	94.3	150.1	0.8
West Asian	205.0	47.8	157.1	0.7

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

The African population in Canada is growing considerably faster than the overall population. Between 1996 and 2001, for example, the number of people reporting they had African origins rose by 32%, whereas the overall population grew by only 4%.

The African population in Canada includes people reporting a number of different ethnic origins. About half of the African population, 51% in 2001, reported they were either Black or simply African, while 11% were Somali, 6% were South African, 6% were from Ghana and 5% were Ethiopian.

The majority of the African population in Canada report they have only one ethnic origin. In 2001, 63% of all those who reported they had African roots indicated they had only one ethnic origin, while 37% said they had more than one. The share of the African population with multiple ethnic roots, though, was similar to that for the overall Canadian population, 40% of which had multiple ethnic roots.

The majority are foreign-born

The majority of the African population living in Canada was born outside the country. In 2001, just over half (53%) of all people with African ethnic origins living in Canada in 2001 was an immigrant, compared with 18% of the overall population.

As well, the majority of African immigrants living in Canada today are relatively recent arrivals. Of immigrants with African ethnic origins living in Canada in 2001, 58% had arrived in the previous decade, while another 31% had arrived in Canada between 1981 and 1990. In

1. All statistical information in this publication referring to African, the African community, Canadians of African origin or people of African origin denotes people who reported African origins either alone or in combination with other ethnic origins in response to the question on ethnic origin in the 2001 Census or 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey.

contrast, only about 6% had arrived in 1960s, while less than 1% had come to Canada before 1961.

Most live in four provinces

The African population in Canada is concentrated primarily in Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta. Indeed, in 2001, 92% of all those who identified themselves as having African ethnic origins lived in one of these provinces. That year, 59% of all Canadians of African descent lived in Ontario, 17%, resided in Quebec, 8%, made British Columbia their home, and another 8% resided in Alberta.

Table 2

The African population in Canada, by province and territory, 2001

	Total African population	The provincial/territorial population	As a proportion of the total African population in Canada
	thousands		percentage
Newfoundland and Labrador	0.4	0.1	0.2
Prince Edward Island	0.2	0.1	0.1
Nova Scotia	10.4	1.2	3.5
New Brunswick	2.2	0.3	0.8
Quebec	48.7	0.7	16.5
Ontario	173.7	1.5	58.9
Manitoba	7.5	0.7	2.5
Saskatchewan	3.4	0.4	1.2
Alberta	22.6	0.8	7.7
British Columbia	25.0	0.6	8.4
Yukon	0.1	0.2	0.0
Northwest Territories	0.2	0.4	0.1
Nunavut	0.1	0.4	0.0
Canada	**294.7**	**1.0**	**100.0**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

Overall, there were almost 175,000 people of African origin living in Ontario in 2001, while there almost 50,000 in Quebec, 25,000 in British Columbia and 23,000 in Alberta. Canadians of African origin in Ontario make up a larger percentage of the provincial population there than they do in any other province or territory In 2001, people of African descent made up almost 2% of the population in Ontario, while they represented close to 1% of that in each of Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta, Nova Scotia and Manitoba.

Further, the large majority of the African population resides in one of Canada's major metropolitan areas. In fact, in 2001, 41% of the overall African ethnic community in Canada lived in Toronto. That year, those who indicated they had African ethnic origins made up 3% of the populations in both Toronto and Halifax, while they made up 2% of all those living in Montreal and 1% of those in each of Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Ottawa.

Age distribution

The African population in Canada is relatively young. In 2001, children under the age of 15 made up 32% of all those with African ethnic origins, whereas children represented just 19% of the overall population. Similarly, 17% of African people, versus 13% of the overall population,

were aged 15 to 24. Africans are also more likely than those in the overall population to be in the prime working age range, between the ages of 25 and 44. In 2001, 34% of Africans were in this age category, compared with 31% of those in the overall population.

Table 3
Age distribution of the African community and overall Canadian population, 2001

	African community			Total Canadian population		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
			percentage			
Age group						
Under 15	32.7	32.2	32.4	20.2	18.6	19.4
15 to 24	16.6	17.0	16.8	14.0	13.0	13.4
25 to 44	33.4	34.3	33.9	30.4	30.6	30.5
45 to 64	14.5	13.1	13.8	24.4	24.4	24.4
65 and over	2.8	3.3	3.0	10.9	13.4	12.2
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total population in thousands	**147.7**	**147.0**	**294.7**	**14,564.3**	**15,074.8**	**29,639.0**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

In contrast, African people are considerably less likely than those in the overall population to be either seniors or approaching retirement age. In 2001, people aged 65 and over made up only 3% of the African population, whereas 12% of all Canadians were seniors. Similarly, only 14% of Africans, versus 24% of the overall population, were aged 45 to 64.

Also, in contrast to the overall population, men make up the slight majority of the African population living in Canada. In 2001, males made up 50.1% of the African community, whereas men represented only 48.9% of the overall population. Women, though, make up the majority of the African population aged 65 and over. That year, 54% of African seniors were women, although this was somewhat below the figure in the overall population in which women made up 56% of seniors in 2001.

Most can converse in an official language

Almost all people of African descent living in Canada can speak at least one official language.[2] Indeed, in 2001, 98.5% could conduct a conversation in one or both official languages, while only 1.5% of the African population in Canada could not speak either English or French.

While most Africans living in Canada can speak at least one official language, a substantial share has a mother tongue[3] other than English or French. In 2001, 32% of all Canadians of African descent had a mother tongue other than one of the two official languages.

A substantial number of Canadians of African descent also speak a language other than English or French in their homes. In 2001, 18% of people identifying themselves as having African ethnic roots reported that they spoke only a non-official language in their home.

2. English and French are recognized as Canada's official languages in the official *Languages Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

3. A mother tongue is the language that a person learns first in childhood and that they still understand.

A small percentage of employed Africans also speak a language other than English or French on the job. In 2001, 1% of employed Africans spoke a language other than English or French only at work, while another 1% regularly used a non-official language in combination with English or French on the job.

Religion

The largest religious group in the African community in Canada is Protestant. In 2001, 30% of African Canadians reported they belonged to a mainline Protestant denomination, while 23% said they were Catholic. At the same time, another 22% of those in the African community in Canada reported they were Muslim. On the other hand, relatively few Africans report that they have no religious affiliation. That year, 12% said they had no religious affiliation, compared with 17% of the overall population.

Family status

Those in the African community in Canada are considerably less likely than other people to be married. In 2001, just 37% of the African population aged 15 and over was married, compared with 50% of the overall adult Canadian population. African people are also less likely than other Canadians to live in a common-law relationship. That year, 6% of Africans aged 15 and over were living in a common-law union, compared with 10% of all adult Canadians.

Table 4
Family status of the African community and overall population aged 15 and over, by sex, 2001

	African community			Total Canadian population		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
	percentage					
Married	39.3	34.8	37.1	51.0	48.3	49.6
Living common-law	6.6	4.9	5.8	10.0	9.4	9.7
Lone parent	3.1	19.8	11.4	2.1	8.7	5.5
Child living at home	22.8	20.0	21.4	19.0	14.0	16.4
Living with relatives	4.7	5.8	5.3	1.9	2.6	2.3
Living with non-relatives	8.9	5.1	7.0	4.7	3.3	4.0
Living alone	14.5	9.6	12.0	11.3	13.7	12.5
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

In contrast to the overall population, Canadians of African origin are more likely than the rest of the population to be lone parents. In 2001, 11% of African people aged 15 and over were lone parents, compared with 6% for the overall population. As with the rest of the population, though, women make up the large majority of African lone parents. That year, women made up 87% of all African lone parents, while the figure in the rest of the population was 81%.

African people are about as likely as others to live alone. In 2001, 12% of the African population aged 15 and over lived alone, while the figure was 13% for all adult Canadians. African seniors, though, are somewhat less likely to live alone than their counterparts in the overall population. That year, 23% of African people aged 65 and over, compared with 29% of all seniors, lived alone. In contrast, African seniors are considerably more likely than other seniors to live with members of their extended family. In 2001, 24% of African seniors lived with other relatives

such as the family of a son or daughter, compared with 5% of their counterparts in the overall senior population.

Education

Those in the African community in Canada are somewhat more likely than the rest of the population to be university graduates. In 2001, 19% of African people aged 15 and over were university graduates, compared with 15% of those in the overall adult population.

Table 5
Educational attainment of the African community and overall Canadian population aged 15 and over, by sex, 2001

	African community			Total Canadian population		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
	percentage					
Less than high school	22.7	27.1	24.9	31.4	31.1	31.3
High school graduate	12.4	13.4	12.9	13.1	15.1	14.1
Some postsecondary	14.8	14.7	14.7	10.7	11.0	10.8
Trades certificate/diploma	9.9	7.9	8.9	14.1	7.8	10.9
College graduate	13.9	18.2	16.1	12.5	17.3	15.0
University certificate/diploma below bachelor's degree	3.6	3.4	3.5	2.1	2.9	2.5
Bachelor's degree	12.8	10.4	11.7	10.6	10.6	10.6
Post-graduate degree	9.9	4.7	7.3	5.4	4.2	4.8
Total with university degree	22.8	15.2	19.0	16.0	14.9	15.4
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

The African population is also somewhat overrepresented among those with post-graduate degrees. In 2001, 7.3% of people aged 15 and over who reported having African origins had either a Master's Degree or an earned doctorate, versus 4.8% of all Canadians in this age range.

As is true in the overall population, African men are somewhat better educated than their female counterparts. In 2001, for example, 23% of African males aged 15 and over, versus 15% of females, had a university degree. In fact, African men are considerably more likely than their respective counterparts in the overall population to have a university degree, whereas African women are about as likely as other women to be a university graduate.

Young African people are also more likely than other young Canadians to be attending school. In 2001, 71% of the African population aged 15 to 24 was enrolled in a full-time educational program, versus just 57% of other young people in this age range. As well, among African people aged 15 to 24, females are slightly more likely than males to be attending school. That year, 72% of African women aged 15 to 24 were enrolled in some form of full-time educational program, compared with 70% of their male counterparts. This is similar to the situation in the overall population in which young women were more likely to be in school than young men.

Employment

People in the African community in Canada are slightly less likely to be employed than the rest of the population. In 2001, 60% of all African people aged 15 and over were employed,

compared with 62% of those in this age range in the overall Canadian population. Africans aged 25 to 44 are particularly less likely than their counterparts in the overall population to be employed. That year, 69% of Africans in this age range were part of the paid workforce, while the figure was 80% for total population aged 25 to 44. In contrast, Africans aged 45 to 64 were somewhat more likely than their counterparts in the overall population, 71% versus 67%, to be employed.

Table 6
Percentage of the population employed, by age group and sex, 2001

	African community			Total Canadian population		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
			percentage			
Age group						
15 to 24	40.7	41.6	41.2	56.1	55.6	55.9
25 to 44	76.0	62.0	68.9	85.6	75.2	80.3
45 to 64	77.8	64.2	71.4	74.8	60.8	67.7
65 and over	17.2	6.1	11.1	13.0	4.8	8.4
Total	**65.3**	**54.6**	**59.9**	**67.2**	**56.1**	**61.5**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

As with the national population, African men are somewhat more likely than their female counterparts to be employed outside the home. In 2001, 65% of African men aged 15 and over were part of the paid workforce, compared with 55% of African women in this age range. Both African men and women, though, were slightly less likely than their counterparts in the overall population to be employed that year.

Labour force participants of African descent tend to be overrepresented among health care workers, as well as those employed in either manufacturing or sales and service jobs. In 2001, for example, 7% of all employed Canadians with African origin worked in the health sector, whereas this was the case for only 5% of all Canadian employees. At the same time, 10% of workers of African origin, versus 8% of the total Canadian workforce, were employed in manufacturing jobs, while 26% of African workers, compared with 24% of the overall workforce, worked in sales or service jobs. On the other hand, Canadian workers with African roots are underrepresented in management jobs. In 2001, 7% of employed people with African origin held management positions, compared with 10% of the overall labour force.

Unemployment

Canadians of African descent are generally more likely to be unemployed[4] than those in the overall workforce. In 2001, 13.1% of African labour force participants were unemployed, compared with 7.4% of all labour force participants.

As with the overall population, young African people experience relatively high unemployment rates. In 2001, 21% of all male African labour force participants aged 15 to 24 were unemployed, well above the figure (14%) for all Canadians males in this age range. At the same time, 20% of African female labour force participants aged 15 to 24 were unemployed, whereas the figure for the overall female population in this age range was 13%.

4. Adults aged 15 and over who are employed, or who are unemployed and looking for work.

Income

The incomes of the African population in Canada are generally below those of the rest of the population. In 2000,[5] people aged 15 and over who identified themselves as having African ethnic origins had an average income from all sources of just under $24,000, almost $6,000 less than the national figure.

Table 7
Average incomes of the African community and overall Canadian population, by age group and sex, 2000

	African community			Total Canadian population		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
			dollars			
Age group						
15 to 24	9,072	7,828	8,444	11,273	9,046	10,182
25 to 44	29,698	21,445	25,567	40,450	26,306	33,308
45 to 64	39,142	26,757	33,385	46,955	26,767	37,026
65 and over	26,692	17,310	21,588	30,775	19,461	24,437
Total	**27,864**	**19,639**	**23,787**	**36,865**	**22,885**	**29,769**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

As with the overall population, African women have lower incomes than their male counterparts. In 2000, African women aged 15 and over had an average income of under $20,000, compared with almost $28,000 for African men. The income gap between African women and men, though, is somewhat smaller than that in the overall population. That year, the average incomes of African women were 70% those of their male counterparts, while the figure in the overall population was 62%.

African seniors also have relatively low incomes. In 2000, African people aged 65 and over had an average income from all sources of $21,600, almost $3,000 less than that for all other seniors. Again, as with the overall senior population, African women aged 65 or over had lower incomes than their male counterparts. That year, senior African women had an average income of just over $17,000, compared with almost $27,000 for African men aged 65 and over.

African people receive a somewhat greater share of their income from earnings[6] than does the overall population. In 2000, 83% of all income of Africans aged 15 and over came from earned sources, compared with 77% for the overall population.

At the same time, the African population receives roughly the same share of its total income from government transfer programs as other people. In 2000, 12% of the income of African people aged 15 and over came in the form of government transfers, the same figure as for the rest of the population.

Many with low incomes

Canadians of African descent are more than twice as likely as those in the overall population to have low incomes. Indeed, in 2000, 39% of the African population in Canada had incomes

5. In the Census, people report their incomes for the previous year.
6. Includes wages and salaries and net income from self-employment.

below Statistics Canada's Low-income Cut-offs, compared with 16% of the overall Canadian population.

An even greater share of African children live in low-income families. In 2000, 47% of African children under the age of 15 lived in a situation considered to be low-income, compared with 19% of all children in Canada.

Unattached African adults are also particularly likely to have low incomes. In 2000, 56% of those with African origins aged 15 and over living on their own had low incomes, compared 38% of their counterparts in the overall population.

African seniors living on their own are particularly likely to have low incomes. In 2000, 60% of unattached African people aged 65 and over had incomes below the Low-income Cut-offs, compared with just 40% of all seniors living on their own. As with the overall population, unattached senior African women are the most likely to be classified as having low incomes. Indeed, 64% these women had incomes below the Low-income Cut-offs that year, compared with 54% of unattached senior African men and 43% of all women aged 65 and over.

Most feel a sense of belonging to Canada

According to the Ethnic Diversity Survey, a large majority of Canadians of African origin feel a strong sense of belonging to Canada. In 2002, 83% of those who reported African origins said they had a strong sense of belonging to Canada. At the same time, 71% said that they had a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic or cultural group.

Canadians of African origin are also active in Canadian society. For example, 66% of those who were eligible to vote reported doing so in the 2000 federal election, while 60% said they voted in the last provincial election. At the same time, about 48% reported that they had participated in an organization such as a sports team or community association in the 12 months preceding the EDS survey conducted in 2002.

At the same time, though, many African Canadians report they have experienced discrimination. Indeed, 50% of Canadians of African origin reported that they had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment based on their ethnicity, race, religion, language or accent in the past five years, or since they arrived in Canada. A majority (87%) of those who had experienced discrimination said that they felt it was based on their race or skin colour, while 62% said that the discrimination took place at work or when applying for a job or promotion.

Summary table

	People of African origin			Total Canadian population		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Total population in thousands	**147.7**	**147.0**	**294.7**	**14,564.3**	**15,074.8**	**29,639.0**
Percentage change between 1996 and 2001	29.1	34.6	31.8	3.7	4.1	3.9
Percentage immigrant	52.7	53.4	53.1	18.0	18.7	18.4
Percentage with Canadian citizenship	76.2	76.8	76.4	94.9	94.5	94.7
Language						
Percentage able to speak English/French	99.0	98.0	98.5	98.8	98.2	98.4
Percentage speaking only non-official language at home	17.1	19.3	18.2	9.6	9.9	9.7
Age distribution						
Percentage aged less than 15	32.7	32.2	32.4	20.2	18.6	19.4
Percentage aged 25 to 44	33.4	34.3	33.9	30.4	30.6	30.5
Percentage aged 65 and over	2.8	3.3	3.0	10.9	13.4	12.2
Family status						
Percentage lone parents[1]	3.1	19.8	11.4	2.1	8.7	5.5
Percentage living alone[1]	14.5	9.6	12.0	11.3	13.7	12.5
Percentage seniors living alone	19.6	25.9	23.1	16.8	38.3	28.9
Education, employment and income						
Percentage with university degree[1]	22.8	15.2	19.0	16.0	14.9	15.4
Percentage employed[1]	65.3	54.6	59.9	67.2	56.1	61.5
Unemployment rate	12.4	13.9	13.1	7.6	7.2	7.4
Percentage with low income	37.6	40.4	39.0	14.7	17.7	16.2

1. Includes people aged 15 and over.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.